



REGIONAL INITIATIVE STRATEGIES



1 Enact city ordinance or official act by the Mayor or City Council and/or adjust city-level policy related to food waste

RETHINK

2 Conduct a food waste audit at government food service operations and/or provide technical assistance for food businesses/institutions to conduct food waste audits

3 Implement organics waste collection at city offices and city-leased properties

4 Include food waste prevention messaging in existing literature distribution and on website and/or use Save the Food ads in public spaces

REDUCE/
PREVENT

5 Sponsor a food waste “challenge” to engage businesses

6 Conduct health inspector training and distribute information to food businesses encouraging food donation and prevention from food facilities

RESCUE

1 Enact city ordinance or official act by the Mayor or City Council and/or adjust city-level policy related to food waste

City Ordinance or Official Act: Making a public commitment to reduce food waste is an important way to harness city leadership and constituent buy-in. It also increases accountability and can inspire other cities. Public commitments can be communicated in different ways—from a report about a “food vision” to a public speech at an event to an executive order or city council resolution. A public commitment can:

- ◇ spark a connection with other cities, helping to build a community that can support your work and create accountability
- ◇ build support internally with city leadership and other departments, and externally with constituents
- ◇ inspire other stakeholders and organizations in your municipality to join in the effort to reduce food waste

City-Level Policy: Another way to make a public commitment is to modify or create policies to drive food waste reduction. City-level policies can influence waste generation and recycling rates, address food waste across the hierarchy, and, depending on the policy, can:

- ◇ help a city achieve broader waste reduction and climate goals, including but not limited to food waste
- ◇ lead to potential job creation benefits, as well as potential cost savings for both residents and businesses
- ◇ lead to reduced disposal costs and improved recycling and composting rates
- ◇ extend the life of existing landfills and delay costs for new landfills



RELATED SECTIONS FROM POLICY AND PROGRAM TOOLKIT

STRATEGY #3

Set short term and long-term waste reduction targets and develop a plan for ongoing measurement

STRATEGY #4

Lay groundwork for broader food waste prevention, food donation and recycling efforts through changes in waste system collection and financing

POTENTIAL PROGRESS METRICS

- ◇ Budget and staff allocation at city level (for each food waste hierarchy strategy)
- ◇ Number of city-level goals or policies related to food waste (including climate, sustainability, and solid waste goals)
- ◇ Number of city-level policies or programs related to home or commercial food scrap recycling

RELEVANT NRDC FOOD MATTERS TOOLS



Guide to Making a Public Commitment on Food Waste

Food Waste Strategic Communications and Partnership Guide

POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS

- ◇ Mayor's Office
- ◇ City Council
- ◇ Solid waste/public works
- ◇ Other city departments
- ◇ Waste haulers
- ◇ Communities impacted by policy changes

EXAMPLES OF IMPLEMENTATION:

[Baltimore, Denver, Nashville, New York City](#)

[Working with Local Government: Nashville's Zero Waste Master Plan](#)

[Massachusetts Pay-As-You-Throw](#)

2 Conduct a food waste audit at government food service operations and/or provide technical assistance for food businesses/institutions to conduct food waste audits

In leading by example, cities demonstrate that they, too, are a part of the solution and are not putting the onus solely on businesses and residents. One of the best ways to demonstrate best practices in food waste measurement, prevention, donation, and recycling at city-run facilities is to conduct a food waste audit at government food service operations. By conducting a waste audit at government food service operations, cities will be better equipped to provide technical assistance for food businesses and institutions to do the same.

Providing ongoing technical assistance to food businesses and institutions is a great way to engage businesses and institutions. This assistance often starts with food waste audits (or ongoing measurement) to help identify what is being wasted, how much, and why, which allows for the development of targeted reduction and tracking waste over time

Optimally, a food waste audit will identify what food items are being thrown away, in what quantities, the reasons for disposal, and to clarify what portion of food waste is generated in commercial kitchens versus after food has been served to consumers. Benefits of waste audits at government food service or food businesses/institutions include:

- ◇ Saving money in food service operations through reduced food purchasing and food scrap disposal
- ◇ Providing community benefits through potential increased food donation
- ◇ Engage staff, businesses and institutions on food waste reduction through technical assistance/training



RELATED SECTIONS FROM POLICY AND PROGRAM TOOLKIT

STRATEGY #5
Lead by example

STRATEGY #7
Engage businesses and institutions to prevent food from being wasted

POTENTIAL PROGRESS METRICS

- ◇ Number (percentage) of businesses/government facilities that have started measuring their food loss and/or waste
- ◇ Resources (dollars, staff hours, etc.) allocated to technical assistance/materials for food businesses and institutions to conduct food waste audits and/or monitor their food waste on an ongoing basis

RELEVANT TOOLS



POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS

- ◇ Government facilities with food service
- ◇ Food service businesses
- ◇ Local non-profit or businesses helping conduct audits

EXAMPLES OF IMPLEMENTATION:

- ◇ [StopWaste case study: Cal Dining](#)
- ◇ [CleanPHL Municipal Building Waste Audit Report](#)

3 Implement organics waste collection at city offices and city-leased properties

Cities can lead by example by implementing organic waste collection, including all food waste, at city offices and city-leased properties, as well as front-of-house and back-of-house of government food service operations. Organic waste bins should ideally be placed near garbage and recycling bins in a convenient location, and in places where organic waste is generated. Cities should ensure that back-of-house employees are trained on use of bins that is consistent with hauler or processor requirements.

Planning for organics collection should be included in the design of new city facilities, including city-owned housing. This means that all new projects should be designed such that they have adequate space for organics recycling (and other material recycling) collection.

By implementing organics waste collection at city offices and city-leased properties, cities can:

- ◇ Show their strong commitment and interest in addressing food waste
- ◇ Open opportunities for participating or innovation by businesses and institutions in the city
- ◇ Raise awareness about food waste and composting amongst city staff and vendors



RELATED SECTIONS FROM POLICY AND PROGRAM TOOLKIT

STRATEGY #5
Lead by example

POTENTIAL PROGRESS METRICS

- ◇ Tons of organic material collected for recycling, with percentage or weight fraction of this as food scraps

RELEVANT TOOLS



TRUE FOOD NO WASTE
A Food Waste Action Plan for Minneapolis Public Schools
January 2019
Prepared by Jonathan Bloom
Commissioned by the Natural Resources Defense Council

NRDC REPORT
GUIDE TO COMPOSTING AT SPORTS VENUES
PREFACE: Allen Hershkowitz, Senior Scientist, Natural Resources Defense Council
AUTHOR: Sarah Hershkowitz, Senior Resource Specialist, Natural Resources Defense Council
SPORTS PROJECT DIRECTOR: John Hershkowitz, Ph.D., Director, Sport Waste Project, Natural Resources Defense Council
PROJECT CONTRIBUTOR: Alicia Harty, Natural Resources Defense Council

POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS

- ◇ Government facilities with food service
- ◇ Local non-profit or businesses providing organic waste collection and/or processing

EXAMPLES OF IMPLEMENTATION:

- ◇ [Nashville Farmer's Market](#)
- ◇ [A Case Study for Food Waste Reduction at the Baltimore Convention Center](#)

4

Include food waste prevention messaging in existing literature distribution and on website and/or use Save the Food ads in public spaces

Households collectively produce 43% of all the food waste in the United States, which is [more than restaurants and grocery stores combined](#). And yet, people don't believe they waste much food. Consumer-facing businesses are also major generators of food waste, collectively generating approximately 40% of all food waste. Many of the reasons for waste in food businesses are related to perceived consumer attitudes about presentation and abundance. If consumers deliver a different message about how they value preventing food waste, this can help motivate businesses to implement food waste prevention strategies in their operations.

Given the magnitude of consumer household food waste, cities can play an important role in both raising awareness and providing action-oriented strategies that consumers can implement in their homes to prevent food from being wasted in the first place. ReFED's "[Roadmap to Reduce U.S. Food Waste by 20 Percent](#)" found that consumer education provides the highest return on investment of all strategies reviewed and is a leading strategy for preventing food waste in America. By promoting a national campaign such as [Save the Food](#), participating cities' education efforts will be backed and boosted by the campaign's reach in other cities, nationally, and across the internet. Engaging residents about preventing food waste can:

- ◇ Raise awareness to support other food waste reduction efforts
- ◇ Prevent food waste from its biggest source
- ◇ Reduce costs by reducing disposed materials to be processed



RELATED SECTIONS FROM [POLICY AND PROGRAM TOOLKIT](#)

STRATEGY #6

Increase public awareness and provide concrete strategies for how households can prevent food from being wasted in the first place

EXAMPLES OF IMPLEMENTATION:

- ◇ [Denver Save the Food](#)
- ◇ [Nashville Save the Food](#)

RELEVANT NRDC FOOD MATTERS TOOLS



Increasing Public Awareness About Food Waste Prevention Guide

POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS

- ◇ Mayor's office
- ◇ Solid waste/public works
- ◇ Other city facility/website managers
- ◇ Residents
- ◇ Department of transportation or transit agency
- ◇ Local publishing/ad agencies

4

Include food waste prevention messaging in existing literature distribution and on website and/or use Save the Food ads in public spaces

POTENTIAL PROGRESS METRICS

- ◇ Number of individuals engaged in or receiving food waste outreach (social media or other estimate of traditional engagement)
- ◇ Number of prevention education materials distributed (e.g., postcards, Save the Food advertising placements)
- ◇ Estimated number of views of public-facing prevention materials (Save the Food billboards, websites, social media, grocery carts, etc.)
- ◇ Number of stakeholders engaged through outreach
- ◇ Amount spent on public outreach campaigns related to food waste
- ◇ Number of media partners engaged in outreach/publicity related to food waste
- ◇ Number of social media posts by public entities related to food waste
- ◇ Number of printed materials distributed (e.g., residential outreach) related to food waste
- ◇ Number/percentage of initiatives related to food waste directly reaching or benefiting underserved and/or low-income neighborhoods

5

Sponsor a food waste “challenge” to engage businesses

POTENTIAL PROGRESS METRICS

- ◇ Number and/or proportion, by sector, of businesses engaging in city challenges to address food waste
- ◇ Number of prevention, rescue, and recycling measures taken by businesses participating in city challenges
- ◇ Number of businesses engaged in prevention/donation/recycling measures
- ◇ Total amounts of preconsumer and postconsumer food waste discarded by businesses participating in city challenges (before and after challenge participation)
- ◇ Amounts of surplus food donated by businesses participating in city challenges (before and after challenge participation)
- ◇ Amounts of food scraps recycled by businesses participating in city challenges (before and after challenge participation)
- ◇ Changes in costs to businesses linked to city challenge participation
- ◇ Number of businesses continuing food waste reduction practices after city challenge participation
- ◇ Results of facility- or sector-based waste characterization studies conducted as part of city challenge
- ◇ Number of workshops on food waste conducted as part of city challenge
- ◇ Number of hours of hands-on instruction/education conducted as part of city challenge

6

Conduct health inspector training and distribute information to food businesses encouraging food donation and prevention from food facilities

Food businesses and other potential food donors often hold the misconception that their city health department discourages donation or that they will be fined if they donate surplus food. Health inspectors are ideally positioned to dispel such myths, convey their city government's interest in addressing food insecurity, and most broadly, communicate directly with licensed food facilities to ensure they have the information they need to donate food safely.

Engaging food facilities around safe food donation can be a powerful way for health inspectors to leverage the full scientific integrity of their profession for a good cause, helping to address the critical issue of food insecurity close to home and ensuring that food safety standards are maintained for the benefit of all concerned.

By engaging with businesses on food waste reduction and food donations, health inspectors can:

- ◇ Educate potential donors to donate food safely and provide information about donor liability protections and tax incentives
- ◇ Help increase donations of surplus food to the people who need it and connect businesses with local food rescue organizations
- ◇ Help make the connection between safe food handling and food waste reduction



RELATED SECTIONS FROM POLICY AND PROGRAM TOOLKIT

STRATEGY #8
Assess and expand food rescue system capacity

STRATEGY #9
Address policy barriers to safe donation of food

EXAMPLES OF IMPLEMENTATION:

- ◇ [Baltimore](#)
- ◇ [Denver](#)
- ◇ [Minneapolis](#)
- ◇ [Nashville](#)

RELEVANT NRDC FOOD MATTERS TOOLS



Health Inspector Training for Food Donation Guide

Food Rescue Landscape Assessment Guide

POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS

- ◇ Health department
- ◇ Food service businesses
- ◇ Food rescue organizations
- ◇ Business engagement agency
- ◇ Economic development department

6

Conduct health inspector training and distribute information to food businesses encouraging food donation and prevention from food facilities

POTENTIAL PROGRESS METRICS

- ◇ Number of health inspectors trained in food donation outreach
- ◇ Development of food donation guidance by city department of health
- ◇ Formal incorporation of food donation topics into department of health site visit protocols
- ◇ Number of city department of health food donation guides directly distributed or mailed to licensed food facilities
- ◇ Number of site visits to city department of health website featuring food donation guidance
- ◇ Number of environmental health policies changed that remove barriers to food donation
- ◇ Amounts of food donated at licensed food facilities before and after outreach by health inspectors
- ◇ Amounts of food wasted at licensed food facilities before and after outreach by health inspectors
- ◇ Number of individual recipients served by rescue organizations
- ◇ Total amount of food donated by entities located in the city (or community of interest)
- ◇ Amount of fresh produce, meat, dairy, deli, and culturally specific foods donated by entities located within the community and/or adoption/expansion of donation programs in these product categories
- ◇ Number of businesses and institutions regularly donating appropriate surplus food
- ◇ Number of new donors and number of consistent donor organizations over time